

Dear Dr. Isken:

My wife and I are educators with over 49 years of teaching experience at all levels of our California K-university system. During those 49 years we have been totally committed to school and community service, including my time on the Colton Unified School District Board of Trustees. We are well acquainted with the educational needs of our students, as well as our school curriculum.

For the last 31 years, we have led a summer leadership training program for 8th and 9th grade students, implementing a curriculum based on our understanding of student needs. Annual surveys of our program participants 4 years after they have been in our program consistently reveal that 99% graduate from high school and 90% enroll in college. The strongest element of our program, the element most credited by our participants for their success is the emphasis we place on providing students with knowledge of Mexican-American/Chicano history and contributions to this nation.

It is because of our success, the success of our curriculum, that we write to you. We have seen a curriculum that informs students about this country's largest minority also motivates them to succeed. We have survey responses that prove such knowledge enhances their self-esteem and belief in their own potential. Survey responses reveal non-Hispanic students acquire a greater respect for and broader understanding of the value of a group they formally minimized. Surely such benefits should be a part of every California student's education.

It is time to correct the failure of our schools to address the existence, history, and contribution of the people of Mexican heritage in our state and nation. It is time to correct the Eurocentric textbook emphasis that subliminally contributes to an image of the Mexican-heritage population as less worthy than others. It is time to provide a complete and accurate portrait of the Mexican-heritage population in school history books.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Tm M. Rivera
Dr. Lily Rivera
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